General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 March 2016

Seventieth session
Agenda item 72 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2015

[*on the report of the Third Committee A/70/489/Add.2*)]

70/156. Human rights and cultural diversity

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, [1] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[2] and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[2] as well as other pertinent human rights instruments,

Recalling also its resolutions 54/160 of 17 December 1999, 55/91 of 4 December 2000, 57/204 of 18 December 2002, 58/167 of 22 December 2003, 60/167 of 16 December 2005, 62/155 of 18 December 2007, 64/174 of 18 December 2009, 66/154 of 19 December 2011 and 68/159 of 18 December 2013, and recalling further its resolutions 54/113 of 10 December 1999, 55/23 of 13 November 2000 and 60/4 of 20 October 2005 concerning the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations,

Noting that numerous instruments within the United Nations system promote cultural diversity, as well as the conservation and development of culture, in particular the Declaration of the Principles of International Culture Cooperation proclaimed on 4 November 1966 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its fourteenth session,[3]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,[4] which highlighted the importance of preserving and protecting a rich cultural diversity and reflected different experiences and perspectives in this regard,

Recalling that, as stated in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, contained in the annex to its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, States have the duty to cooperate with one another, irrespective of the differences in their political, economic and social systems, in the various spheres of international relations, in the promotion of universal respect for and

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Fourteenth Session, Paris, 1966, Resolutions*.

[4] A/70/167.

Please recycle

observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and in the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and all forms of religious intolerance,

Welcoming the adoption, by its resolution 56/6 of 9 November 2001, of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations,

Welcoming also the contribution of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 8 September 2001, the Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva from 20 to 24 April 2009, and the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, held on 22 September 2011, to the promotion of respect for cultural diversity,

Welcoming further the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[5] together with its Action Plan,[6] adopted on 2 November 2001 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-first session, in which member States invited the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to cooperate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the promotion of the principles set forth in the Declaration and its Action Plan, with a view to enhancing the synergy of actions in favour of cultural diversity,

Recalling the Ministerial Meeting on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Tehran on 3 and 4 September 2007,

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis, and that, while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Expressing concern over the adverse impacts of lack of respect for and recognition of cultural diversity on human rights, justice, friendship and the fundamental right to development,

Recognizing that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are a source of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

Recognizing also the contribution that diverse cultures have been making to the development and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Taking into account that a culture of peace actively fosters non-violence and respect for human rights and strengthens solidarity among peoples and nations and dialogue between cultures,

---

[5] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October–3 November 2001*, vol. 1 and corrigendum, *Resolutions*, sect. V, resolution 25, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

Reaffirming that discriminatory treatment against different cultures and religions is detrimental to the principle of the equality of human beings,

Recognizing that all cultures and civilizations share a common set of universal values,

Recognizing also that the promotion of the rights of indigenous people and their cultures and traditions will contribute to the respect for and observance of cultural diversity among all peoples and nations,

Considering that tolerance of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversities, as well as dialogue among and within civilizations, is essential for peace, understanding and friendship among individuals and people of different cultures and nations of the world, while manifestations of cultural prejudice, intolerance and xenophobia towards different cultures and religions generate hatred, violence and extremism among peoples and nations throughout the world,

Recognizing in each culture a dignity and value that deserve recognition, respect and preservation, and convinced that, in their rich variety and diversity, and in the reciprocal influences that they exert on one another, all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all humankind,

Convinced that the promotion of cultural pluralism and tolerance towards and dialogue among various cultures and civilizations would contribute to the efforts of all peoples and nations to enrich their cultures and traditions by engaging in a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and intellectual, moral and material achievements,

Acknowledging the diversity of the world, recognizing that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind, acknowledging the importance of respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world, and, in order to promote international peace and security, committing itself to advancing human welfare, freedom and progress everywhere, as well as to encouraging tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and peoples,

1. *Affirms* the importance for all peoples and nations to hold, develop and preserve their cultural heritage and traditions in a national and international atmosphere of peace, tolerance and mutual respect;

2. *Emphasizes* the important contribution of culture to development and the achievement of national development objectives and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

3. *Welcomes* the adoption on 25 September 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[7] in which Member States acknowledged the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognized that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development;

4. *Recognizes* the importance given to cultural diversity in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including in Sustainable Development Goal 4, related to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all;

[7] Resolution 70/1.

5. *Also recognizes* the right of everyone to take part in cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications;

6. *Affirms* that the international community should strive to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by globalization in a manner that ensures respect for the cultural diversity of all;

7. *Expresses its determination* to prevent and mitigate cultural homogenization in the context of globalization, through increased intercultural exchange guided by the promotion and protection of cultural diversity;

8. *Affirms* that intercultural dialogue essentially enriches the common understanding of human rights and that the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and development of international contacts and cooperation in the cultural fields are important;

9. *Welcomes* the recognition at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance of the necessity of respecting and maximizing the benefits of diversity within and among all nations in working together to build a harmonious and productive future by putting into practice and promoting values and principles such as justice, equality and non-discrimination, democracy, fairness and friendship, tolerance and respect within and among communities and nations, in particular through public information and educational programmes to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of cultural diversity, including programmes in which the public authorities work in partnership with international and non-governmental organizations and other sectors of civil society;

10. *Emphasizes* that dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations on the basis of equal dignity should be enhanced, through supporting efforts made at the international level towards reducing confrontation, suppressing xenophobia and promoting respect for diversity, and in that regard also emphasizes that States should oppose all attempts at uniculturalism or the imposition of particular models of social or cultural systems and promote dialogue among civilizations, a culture of peace and interfaith dialogue, which will contribute towards peace, security and development;

11. *Welcomes* the activities of the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity in Tehran, and acknowledges the important role that the Centre plays in the promotion of the universality of all human rights as well as their realization;

12. *Recognizes* that respect for cultural diversity and the cultural rights of all enhances cultural pluralism, contributing to a wider exchange of knowledge and understanding of cultural background, advancing the application and enjoyment of universally accepted human rights throughout the world and fostering stable, friendly relations among peoples and nations worldwide;

13. *Emphasizes* that the promotion of cultural pluralism and tolerance at the national, regional and international levels is important for enhancing respect for cultural rights and cultural diversity;

14. *Also emphasizes* that tolerance and respect for diversity facilitate the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including gender equality and the enjoyment of all human rights by all, and underlines the fact that tolerance and respect for cultural diversity and the universal promotion and protection of human rights are mutually supportive;

15. *Urges* all actors on the international scene to build an international order based on inclusion, justice, equality and equity, human dignity, mutual understanding and promotion of and respect for cultural diversity and universal human rights, and to reject all doctrines of exclusion based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

16. *Calls upon* States, relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations to support and embark on intercultural initiatives on human rights in order to promote all human rights, thereby enriching their universality;

17. *Urges* States to ensure that their political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity within their societies and, where necessary, to improve democratic institutions so that they are more fully participatory and avoid marginalization and exclusion of, and discrimination against, specific sectors of society;

18. *Calls upon* States, international organizations and United Nations agencies, and invites civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to recognize and promote respect for cultural diversity for the purpose of advancing the objectives of peace, development and universally accepted human rights;

19. *Stresses* the necessity of freely using the media and new information and communications technologies to create the conditions for a renewed dialogue among cultures and civilizations;

20. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to bear in mind fully the issues raised in the present resolution in the course of its activities for the promotion and protection of human rights;

21. *Also requests* the Office of the High Commissioner, and invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to support initiatives aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue on human rights;

22. *Urges* relevant international organizations to conduct studies on how respect for cultural diversity contributes to fostering international solidarity and cooperation among all nations;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including efforts undertaken at the national, regional and international levels regarding the recognition and importance of cultural diversity among all peoples and nations in the world and taking into account the views of Member States, relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, and to submit the report to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session;

24. *Decides* to continue consideration of the question at its seventy-second session under the sub-item entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms" of the item entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights".

80th plenary meeting
17 December 2015

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 March 2016

Seventieth session
Agenda item 72 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2015

[*on the report of the Third Committee A/70/489/Add.2*)]

70/157. Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the commitment made by all States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to, inter alia, religion or belief,

Reaffirming also the obligation of States to prohibit discrimination and violence on the basis of religion or belief and to implement measures to guarantee the equal and effective protection of the law,

Reaffirming further that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,

Reaffirming that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [1] provides, inter alia, that everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, which shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching,

Reaffirming also the positive role that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information can play in strengthening democracy and combating religious intolerance, and reaffirming further that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities, in accordance with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Expressing deep concern at those acts that advocate religious hatred and thereby undermine the spirit of tolerance,

Reaffirming that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group,

[1] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

Please recycle

Condemning the criminal acts committed by terrorist and extremist groups and movements against persons based on their religion or belief, and deeply regretting attempts to link these acts to any one specific religion or belief,

Reaffirming that violence can never be an acceptable response to acts of intolerance on the basis of religion or belief,

Welcoming Human Rights Council resolutions 16/18 of 24 March 2011,[2] 19/25 of 23 March 2012,[3] 22/31 of 22 March 2013[4] and 28/29 of 27 March 2015[5] and General Assembly resolutions 67/178 of 20 December 2012, 68/169 of 18 December 2013 and 69/174 of 18 December 2014,

Recalling its adoption of resolutions 69/140 of 15 December 2014 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and 69/312 of 6 July 2015 on the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,

Deeply concerned about continuing incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against persons based on their religion or belief in all regions of the world,

Deploring any advocacy of discrimination or violence on the basis of religion or belief,

Strongly deploring all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship,

Strongly deploring also all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines in violation of international law, in particular human rights law and international humanitarian law, including any deliberate destruction of relics and monuments,

Deeply concerned about the prevalence of impunity in some instances, and the lack of accountability in some cases, in addressing violence against persons on the basis of religion or belief in public and private spheres, and stressing the importance of making necessary efforts to raise awareness to address the spread of hate speech against persons on the basis of religion or belief,

Concerned about actions that wilfully exploit tensions or target individuals on the basis of their religion or belief,

Expressing deep concern at the instances of intolerance, discrimination and acts of violence occurring in the world, including cases motivated by discrimination against persons belonging to religious minorities, in addition to the negative projection of the followers of religions and the enforcement of measures that specifically discriminate against persons on the basis of religion or belief,

Expressing concern at the growing manifestations of intolerance based on religion or belief, which can generate hatred and violence among individuals from and within different nations and which may have serious implications at the national, regional and international levels, and in this regard emphasizing the

---

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/66/53), chap. II, sect. A.

[3] Ibid., *Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 53* and corrigendum (A/67/53 and Corr.1), chap. III, sect. A.

[4] Ibid., *Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/68/53), chap. IV, sect. A.

[5] Ibid., *Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/70/53), chap. III, sect. A.

importance of respect for religious and cultural diversity, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue aimed at promoting a culture of tolerance and respect among individuals, societies and nations,

Recognizing the valuable contribution of people of all religions or beliefs to humanity and the contribution that dialogue among religious groups can make towards an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Underlining the fact that States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and the media have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity and in the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief,

Underlining also the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions or beliefs and of education in the promotion of tolerance, which involves the acceptance by the public of and its respect for religious and cultural diversity, including with regard to religious expression, and underlining further the fact that education, in particular at school, should contribute in a meaningful way to promoting tolerance and the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief,

Recognizing that working together to enhance the implementation of existing legal regimes that protect individuals against discrimination and hate crimes, increasing interreligious, interfaith and intercultural efforts and expanding human rights education are important first steps in combating incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against individuals on the basis of religion or belief,

Recalling its resolution 68/127, entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism", adopted by consensus on 18 December 2013, welcoming the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in promoting intercultural dialogue, the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the work of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures in Alexandria, Egypt, and the work of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna, and recalling also its resolution 65/5 of 20 October 2010 on World Interfaith Harmony Week, proposed by King Abdullah II of Jordan,

Welcoming, in this regard, all international, regional and national initiatives aimed at promoting interreligious, intercultural and interfaith harmony and combating discrimination against individuals on the basis of religion or belief, noting the initiative of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide on the role of religious leaders in preventing incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes and the draft declaration of its forum held in Fez, Morocco, on 23 and 24 April 2015, the launch of "Appeal for Peace 2015" at the twenty-eighth annual international, interreligious gathering of religious leaders from 60 countries on the theme "Peace is always possible: religions and cultures in dialogue", held in Tirana from 6 to 8 September 2015, and the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the Basis of Religion or Belief, and taking note of the initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its outcome document, the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or

religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, adopted in Rabat on 5 October 2012,[6]

Taking note with appreciation of the continuation of the organization of workshops and meetings within the framework of the Istanbul Process and the promotion of effective implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 to counter global violence, religious discrimination and intolerance, in particular the recent fifth implementation meeting of the Process, hosted by the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 3 and 4 June 2015,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[7]

2. *Expresses deep concern* at the continued serious instances of derogatory stereotyping, negative profiling and stigmatization of persons based on their religion or belief, as well as programmes and agendas pursued by extremist individuals, organizations and groups aimed at creating and perpetuating negative stereotypes about religious groups, in particular when condoned by Governments;

3. *Expresses concern* that the number of incidents of religious intolerance, discrimination and related violence, as well as of negative stereotyping of individuals on the basis of religion or belief, continues to rise around the world, which may have serious implications at the national, regional and international levels, condemns, in this context, any advocacy of religious hatred against individuals that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and urges States to take effective measures, as set forth in the present resolution and consistent with their obligations under international human rights law, to address and combat such incidents;

4. *Condemns* any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audiovisual or electronic media or any other means;

5. *Recognizes* that the open public debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national and international levels, can be among the best protections against religious intolerance and can play a positive role in strengthening democracy and combating religious hatred, and expresses its conviction that a continuing dialogue on these issues can help to overcome existing misperceptions;

6. *Also recognizes* the strong need for global awareness about the possible serious implications of incitement to discrimination and violence, which may have serious implications at the national, regional and international levels, and urges all Member States to make renewed efforts to develop educational systems that promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms that enhance tolerance for religious and cultural diversity, which is fundamental to promoting tolerant, peaceful and harmonious multicultural societies;

[6] A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix.

[7] A/70/415.

7. *Calls upon* all States to take the following actions, as called for by the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to foster a domestic environment of religious tolerance, peace and respect by:

(*a*) Encouraging the creation of collaborative networks to build mutual understanding, promoting dialogue and inspiring constructive action towards shared policy goals and the pursuit of tangible outcomes, such as servicing projects in the fields of education, health, conflict prevention, employment, integration and media education;

(*b*) Creating an appropriate mechanism within Governments to, inter alia, identify and address potential areas of tension between members of different religious communities and assisting with conflict prevention and mediation;

(*c*) Encouraging the training of government officials in effective outreach strategies;

(*d*) Encouraging the efforts of leaders to discuss within their communities the causes of discrimination and developing strategies to counter those causes;

(*e*) Speaking out against intolerance, including advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence;

(*f*) Adopting measures to criminalize incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief;

(*g*) Understanding the need to combat denigration and the negative religious stereotyping of persons, as well as incitement to religious hatred, by strategizing and harmonizing actions at the local, national, regional and international levels through, inter alia, education and awareness-raising;

(*h*) Recognizing that the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national, regional and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence;

8. *Also calls upon* all States:

(*a*) To take effective measures to ensure that public functionaries, in the conduct of their public duties, do not discriminate against an individual on the basis of religion or belief;

(*b*) To foster religious freedom and pluralism by promoting the ability of members of all religious communities to manifest their religion and to contribute openly and on an equal footing to society;

(*c*) To encourage the representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their religion or belief, in all sectors of society;

(*d*) To make a strong effort to counter religious profiling, which is understood to be the invidious use of religion as a criterion in conducting questioning, searches and other investigative law enforcement procedures;

9. *Further calls upon* all States to adopt measures and policies to promote full respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines and to take protective measures in cases where they are vulnerable to vandalism or destruction;

10. *Calls for* strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs;

11. *Encourages* all States to consider providing updates on efforts made in this regard as part of ongoing reporting to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and in this respect requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to include those updates in his reports to the Human Rights Council;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session a report that includes information provided by the High Commissioner on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in the present resolution.

80th plenary meeting
17 December 2015

United Nations A/RES/70/158

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 March 2016

Seventieth session
Agenda item 72 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2015

[*on the report of the Third Committee A/70/489/Add.2*)]

70/158. Freedom of religion or belief

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, by which it proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

Recalling also article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[1] article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[2] and other relevant human rights provisions,

Recalling further its previous resolutions on freedom of religion or belief and on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief, including resolution 69/175 of 18 December 2014, and Human Rights Council resolution 28/18 of 27 March 2015,[3]

Recognizing the important work carried out by the Human Rights Committee in providing guidance with respect to the scope of freedom of religion or belief,

Noting the conclusions and recommendations of the expert workshops organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and contained in the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, adopted in Rabat on 5 October 2012,[4]

Considering that religion or belief, for those who profess either, is one of the fundamental elements in their conception of life and that freedom of religion or belief, as a universal human right, should be fully respected and guaranteed,

Seriously concerned at continuing acts of intolerance and violence based on religion or belief against individuals, including against persons belonging to religious communities and religious minorities around the world, and at the increasing number

[1] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[2] Resolution 217 A (III).

[3] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/70/53), chap. III, sect. A.

[4] A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix.

Please recycle

and intensity of such incidents, which are often of a criminal nature and may have international characteristics,

Deeply concerned at the limited progress that has been made in the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief, and believing that further intensified efforts are therefore required to promote and protect the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief and to eliminate all forms of hatred, intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, as noted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 8 September 2001, as well as at the Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva from 20 to 24 April 2009,

Recalling that States have the primary responsibility to promote and protect human rights, including the human rights of persons belonging to religious minorities, including their right to exercise their religion or belief freely,

Concerned that official authorities sometimes tolerate or encourage acts of violence, or credible threats of violence, against persons belonging to religious communities and religious minorities,

Concerned also at the increasing number of laws and regulations that limit the freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief and at the implementation of existing laws in a discriminatory manner,

Convinced of the need to urgently address the rapid rise in various parts of the world of religious extremism that affects the human rights of individuals, in particular persons belonging to religious communities and religious minorities, the situations of violence and discrimination that affect many individuals, particularly women and children, on the basis of or in the name of religion or belief or in accordance with cultural and traditional practices, and the misuse of religion or belief for ends inconsistent with the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations and in other relevant instruments of the United Nations,

Seriously concerned about all attacks on religious places, sites and shrines that violate international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including any deliberate destruction of relics and monuments,

Emphasizing that States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies, the media and civil society as a whole have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity and in the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief,

Underlining the importance of education, including human rights education, in the promotion of tolerance, which involves the acceptance by the public of, and its respect for, diversity, including with regard to religious expression, and underlining also the fact that education, in particular at school, should contribute in a meaningful way to promoting tolerance and the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief,

1. *Stresses* that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, which includes the freedom to have or not to have, or to adopt, a religion or belief of one's own choice and the freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance, including the right to change one's religion or belief;

2. *Emphasizes* that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief applies equally to all persons, regardless of their religion or belief and without any discrimination as to their equal protection by the law;

3. *Strongly condemns* violations of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief as well as all forms of intolerance, discrimination and violence based on religion or belief;

4. *Recognizes with deep concern* the overall rise in instances of discrimination, intolerance and violence, regardless of the actors, directed against members of many religious and other communities in various parts of the world, including cases motivated by Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Christianophobia and prejudices against persons of other religions or beliefs;

5. *Reaffirms* that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion or belief as this may have adverse consequences for the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief of all members of the religious communities concerned;

6. *Strongly condemns* violence and acts of terrorism, which are increasing in number and intensity, targeting individuals, including persons belonging to religious minorities, on the basis of or in the name of religion or belief;

7. *Recalls* that States have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against persons belonging to religious minorities, regardless of the perpetrator, and that failure to do so may constitute a human rights violation;

8. *Emphasizes* that freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and stresses the role that these rights can play in the fight against all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief;

9. *Strongly condemns* any advocacy of hatred based on religion or belief that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audiovisual or electronic media or any other means;

10. *Expresses concern* at the persistence of institutionalized social intolerance and discrimination practised against many on the grounds of religion or belief, and emphasizes that legal procedures pertaining to religious or belief-based groups and places of worship are not a prerequisite for the exercise of the right to manifest one's religion or belief and that such procedures, when legally required at the national or local level, should be non-discriminatory in order to contribute to the effective protection of the right of all persons to practise their religion or belief, either individually or in community with others and in public or private;

11. *Recognizes with concern* the situation of persons in vulnerable situations, including persons deprived of their liberty, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, children, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and migrants, as regards their ability to freely exercise their right to freedom of religion or belief;

12. *Emphasizes* that, as underlined by the Human Rights Committee, restrictions on the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief are permitted only if limitations are prescribed by law, are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, are non-discriminatory and are applied in a manner that does not vitiate the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief;

13. *Expresses deep concern* at continued obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief as well as the increasing number of instances of intolerance, discrimination and violence based on religion or belief, including:

(*a*) Acts of violence and intolerance directed against individuals based on their religion or belief, including religious persons and persons belonging to religious minorities and other communities in various parts of the world;

(*b*) The rise of religious extremism in various parts of the world that affects the human rights of individuals, including persons belonging to religious minorities;

(*c*) Incidents of hatred, discrimination, intolerance and violence based on religion or belief, which may be associated with or manifested by the derogatory stereotyping, negative profiling and stigmatization of persons based on their religion or belief;

(*d*) Attacks on or destruction of religious places, sites and shrines that violate international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as they have more than material significance for the dignity and lives of persons holding spiritual or religious beliefs;

(*e*) Instances, both in law and practice, that constitute violations of the human right to freedom of religion or belief, including of the individual right to publicly express one's spiritual and religious beliefs, taking into account the relevant articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[1] as well as other international instruments;

(*f*) Constitutional and legislative systems that fail to provide adequate and effective guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief to all without distinction;

14. *Urges* States to step up their efforts to protect and promote freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, and to this end:

(*a*) To ensure that their constitutional and legislative systems provide adequate and effective guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief to all without distinction by, inter alia, providing access to justice, including by facilitating legal assistance and effective remedies in cases where the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief or the right to freely choose and practise one's religion or belief is violated, paying particular attention to persons belonging to religious minorities;

(*b*) To implement all accepted universal periodic review recommendations related to the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief;

(*c*) To ensure that no one within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction is deprived of the right to life, liberty and security of person because of religion or belief, to provide adequate protection to persons at risk of violent attack on the grounds of their religion or belief, to ensure that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment or arbitrary arrest or detention on that account and to bring to justice all perpetrators of violations of these rights;

(*d*) To end violations of the human rights of women and to devote particular attention to appropriate measures modifying or abolishing existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that discriminate against women, including in the exercise of their right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, and to foster practical ways to ensure equality between men and women;

(*e*) To ensure that existing legislation is not implemented in a discriminatory manner or does not result in discrimination based on religion or belief, that no one is discriminated against on the basis of his or her religion or belief when accessing, inter alia, education, medical care, employment, humanitarian assistance or social benefits and that everyone has the right and the opportunity to have access, on general terms of equality, to public services in their country, without any discrimination based on religion or belief;

(*f*) To review, whenever relevant, existing registration practices in order to ensure that such practices do not limit the right of all persons to manifest their religion or belief, either alone or in community with others and in public or private;

(*g*) To ensure that no official documents are withheld from the individual on the grounds of religion or belief and that everyone has the right to refrain from disclosing information concerning their religious affiliation in such documents against their will;

(*h*) To ensure, in particular, the right of all persons to worship, assemble or teach in connection with a religion or belief, their right to establish and maintain places for these purposes and the right of all persons to seek, receive and impart information and ideas in these areas;

(*i*) To ensure that, in accordance with appropriate national legislation and in conformity with international human rights law, the freedom of all persons and members of groups to establish and maintain religious, charitable or humanitarian institutions is fully respected and protected;

(*j*) To ensure that all public officials and civil servants, including members of law enforcement bodies, and personnel of detention facilities, the military and educators, in the course of fulfilling their official duties, respect freedom of religion or belief and do not discriminate for reasons based on religion or belief, and that they receive all necessary and appropriate awareness-raising, education or training on respect for freedom of religion or belief;

(*k*) To take all necessary and appropriate action, in conformity with international standards of human rights, to combat hatred, discrimination, intolerance and acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by intolerance based on religion or belief, as well as incitement to hostility and violence, with particular regard to persons belonging to religious minorities in all parts of the world;

(*l*) To promote, through education and other means, mutual understanding, tolerance, non-discrimination and respect in all matters relating to freedom of religion or belief by encouraging, in society at large, a wider knowledge of the diversity of religions and beliefs and of the history, traditions, languages and cultures of the various religious minorities existing within their jurisdiction;

(*m*) To prevent any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on religion or belief that impairs the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis and to detect signs of intolerance that may lead to discrimination based on religion or belief;

15. *Welcomes and encourages* initiatives by the media to promote tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity and the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, and stresses the importance of unhindered participation in the media and in public discourse for all persons, regardless of their religion or belief;

16. *Stresses* the importance of a continued and strengthened dialogue in all its forms, including among and within religions or beliefs, and with broader participation, including of women, to promote greater tolerance, respect and mutual understanding, and welcomes different initiatives in this regard, including the Alliance of Civilizations initiative and the programmes led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

17. *Welcomes and encourages* the continuing efforts of all actors in society, including non-governmental organizations and bodies and groups based on religion or belief, to promote the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,[5] and further encourages their work in promoting freedom of religion or belief, in highlighting cases of religious intolerance, discrimination and persecution and in promoting religious tolerance;

18. *Recommends* that States, the United Nations and other actors, including non-governmental organizations and bodies and groups based on religion or belief, in their efforts to promote freedom of religion or belief, ensure the widest possible dissemination of the text of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief in as many different languages as possible, and promote its implementation;

19. *Takes note with appreciation* of the work and the interim report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on freedom of religion or belief on the rights of the child and his or her parents in the area of freedom of religion or belief, [6] and encourages States to consider addressing violations and abuses highlighted in the interim report, including the forcible abduction and conversion of children from religious minorities;

20. *Urges* all Governments to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur, to respond favourably to his requests to visit their countries and to provide all information and follow-up necessary for the effective fulfilment of his mandate;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Rapporteur receives the resources necessary to fully discharge his mandate;

22. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session;

23. *Decides* to consider the question of the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance at its seventy-first session under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights".

80th plenary meeting
17 December 2015

---

[5] Resolution 36/55.

[6] See A/70/286.